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FAA 02-14012-1



**THE BLUE ANGELS**  
**UNITED STATES NAVY FLIGHT DEMONSTRATION SQUADRON**  
390 SAN CARLOS RD SUITE A  
PENSACOLA FLORIDA 32508-5508

18 November 2002

Rules Docket, AGC-10  
Docket Number 24052  
800 Independence Ave, S. W.  
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Sir,

The United States Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron (Blue Angels) requests an extension of the existing number 4504D, regulatory docket number 24052, which expires 31 March 2003.

This exception permits the Blue Angels to conduct air show rehearsals in the vicinity of Choctaw, Florida; Pensacola Florida; and El Centro, California. The conditions which existed for the original request are still in effect today. Per current FAA policy on exemptions, request a three-year extension of the current exemption to expire 31 March 2006.

My point of contact for further information regarding this matter is LCDR Daniel Martin, U. S. Navy, Operations Officer, (850) 452-2583 X115, or in El Centro CA at (760) 339-2633.

Sincerely,

R. J. BARTLETT  
Commander, U. S. Navy  
Commanding Officer

DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION  
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U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

800 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20591

MAR 15 2000

Exemption No. 4504F  
Regulatory Docket No. 24052

Commander P. Driscoll  
U.S. Navy Commanding Officer  
U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron  
The Blue Angels  
390 San Carlos Road  
Suite A  
Pensacola, FL 32508-5508

Dear Commander Driscoll:

This is in response to your November 7, 1999, letter petitioning the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on behalf of The Blue Angels, U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron for a 3-year extension of Exemption No. 4504, as amended. That exemption from CFR §§ 91.117(a) and (b), 91.119(c), and 91.303(c), (d), and (e) of Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) permits the Blue Angels to conduct demonstration rehearsals involving low-level, high-speed, and aerobatic flight, subject to certain conditions and limitations.

In your petition, you indicate that the conditions and reasons regarding public interest and safety, presented in the original petition upon which the exemption was granted, remain unchanged.

The FAA has determined that good cause exists for not publishing a summary of the petition in the Federal Register because the requested extension of the exemption would not set a precedent, and any delay in acting on this petition would be detrimental to The Blue Angels.

The FAA has determined that the justification for the issuance of Exemption No. 4504, as amended, remains valid with respect to this exemption.


In consideration of the foregoing, I find that a grant of exemption is in the public interest. Therefore, pursuant to the authority contained in 49 U.S.C. §§ 40113 and 44701, delegated to me by the Administrator (14 CFR § 11.53), Exemption No. 4504, as amended, is hereby further amended

AFS-00-215-E

by extending its March 31, 2000, termination date to March 31, 2003, unless sooner superseded or rescinded.

All other conditions and limitations of Exemption No. 4504, as amended, remain the same. This letter shall be attached to, and is a part of, Exemption No. 4504.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Nicholas Lacey'. The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke and a large, looped flourish at the end.

L. Nicholas Lacey  
Director, Flight Standards Service

Exemption No. 4504E

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20591

\* \* \* \* \*  
\*  
In the matter of the petition of \*  
\*  
U.S. NAVY FLIGHT DEMONSTRATION \*  
SQUADRON (THE BLUE ANGELS) \*  
\*  
for an exemption from §§ 91.117(a) \*  
and (b), 91.119(c), and 91.303(c), \*  
(d), and (e) of Title 14, Code of \*  
Federal Regulations \*  
\*  
\* \* \* \* \*

Regulatory Docket No. 24052

GRANT OF EXEMPTION

By letter dated December 17, 1996, Commander G.B. Dom, U.S. Navy Commanding Officer, U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, 390 San Carlos Road, Suite A, Pensacola, Florida 32508-5508, petitioned the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for a 3-year extension of Exemption No. 4504, as amended. That exemption from §§ 91.117(a) and (b), 91.119(c), and 91.303(c), (d), and (e) of Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) permits Blue Angels pilots to conduct airshow rehearsals involving low-level, high-speed, and aerobatic flight, subject to certain conditions and limitations.

The petitioner requires relief from the following regulations:

Section 91.117(a) prescribes that, unless otherwise authorized by the Administrator, no person may operate an aircraft below 10,000 feet mean sea level at an indicated airspeed (IAS) of more than 250 knots.

Section 91.117(b) prescribes, in pertinent part, that unless otherwise authorized or required by air traffic control (ATC), no person may operate an aircraft at or below 2,500 feet above the surface within 4 nautical miles of the primary airport of a Class C or Class D airspace area at an IAS of more than 200 knots.

Section 91.119(c) prescribes, in pertinent part, that except when necessary for takeoff or landing, no person may operate an aircraft over other than a congested area at an altitude that is below 500 feet above the surface. However, if the area over which an aircraft operates is open water or is sparsely populated, then flight may be conducted at an altitude lower than 500 feet above the

surface, provided the aircraft is at least 500 feet away from any person, vessel, vehicle, or structure.

Sections 91.303(c), (d), and (e) prescribe, in pertinent part, that no person may operate an aircraft in aerobatic flight within the lateral boundaries of the surface areas of Class C and Class D airspace designated for an airport; within 4 nautical miles of the center line of any Federal airway; or below an altitude of 1,500 feet above the surface. Section 91.303 defines aerobatic flight as any intentional maneuver involving an abrupt change in an aircraft's attitude, an abnormal attitude, or abnormal acceleration, not necessary for normal flight.

The petitioner supports its request with the following information:

The petitioner states that the conditions and reasons presented in the original petition upon which the exemption was granted remain unchanged.

The FAA has determined that good cause exists for waiving the requirement for Federal Register publication because the exemption, if granted, would not set a precedent, and any delay in acting on this petition would be detrimental to the Blue Angels.

The FAA's analysis/summary is as follows:

On the basis of experience over several years with demonstration rehearsal operations at the specified airports, the FAA agrees that the Blue Angels' requested operations can be conducted with an equivalent level of safety as that provided by the rules from which relief is sought.

The FAA also recognizes that there are operations that must be conducted at speeds in excess of 250 knots to maintain safety. The formation flight operations conducted by the Blue Angels must be conducted at higher speeds so that safety can be maintained; therefore, an exemption is considered unnecessary for formation flight operations.

However, the FAA revised previous Condition Nos. 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, and 11 and renumbered these conditions as appropriate, and added Condition Nos. 11c, 13, 14, and 15 to further clarify the terms of this exemption and to ensure a level of safety equivalent to that provided by the sections from which the exemption is sought. All other conditions and limitations of this exemption remain the same.

The FAA notes that in previous exemptions granted to the Blue Angels to conduct airshow rehearsals, paragraph (e) of § 91.303 was inadvertently omitted. Therefore, § 91.303(e) has been included in this grant of exemption.

In consideration of the foregoing, I find that a grant of exemption is in the public interest. Therefore, pursuant to the authority contained in 49 U.S.C. § 40109, formerly § 307(e) of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958, as amended, delegated to me by the Administrator (14 CFR § 11.53), U.S. Navy pilots designated as the Blue Angels conducting flight in U.S. Navy aircraft assigned to the Flight Demonstration Squadron, NAS (Naval Air Station) Pensacola, Florida, are hereby granted an exemption from 14 CFR §§ 91.117(a) and (b), 91.119(c), and 91.303(c), (d), and (e) to the extent necessary to allow the Blue Angels to conduct demonstration rehearsals involving low-level, high-speed, and aerobatic flight, subject to the following conditions and limitations:

1. Operations under this exemption may be conducted only in Class C and Class D airspace at NAS Pensacola, Florida; NAS Choctaw, Florida; and Naval Air Facility (NAF) El Centro, California.
2. Operations in the NAS Pensacola, Florida, Class C airspace must be conducted in accordance with a notification procedure with the operators of Ferguson Airport. As a minimum, the Blue Angels must provide Ferguson Airport operators with the following information:
  - a. A schedule of the Blue Angels' planned rehearsal sessions; and
  - b. The planned locations and flight paths of rehearsal operations. This information shall be in a form that facilitates the recognition of flight paths and alternatives to flight into such locations.
3. The areas and flight paths in the NAS Pensacola Class C airspace that are used frequently by pilots operating to and from the Ferguson Airport must be avoided when conducting operations under the terms of this exemption.
4. Information required by Condition No. 2 of this exemption must be provided within a sufficient period of time, in advance of the beginning of an actual demonstration rehearsal operation, so that users of Ferguson Airport may avoid locations and flight paths of the operations conducted under the terms of this exemption.
5. Operations in the NAF El Centro, California, Class D airspace must be conducted under a notification procedure with the operators of Imperial Airport. As a minimum, the operators of Imperial Airport must be provided with the following information:
  - a. A schedule of the Blue Angels' planned rehearsal sessions; and
  - b. The planned locations and flight paths of rehearsal operations. This information shall be in a form that facilitates the recognition of flight paths and alternatives to flight into such locations.

6. The areas and flight paths in the NAF El Centro Class D airspace used frequently by pilots operating to and from the Imperial Airport must be avoided while conducting operations under the terms of this exemption.
7. Information required by Condition No. 5 of this exemption must be provided within a sufficient period of time, in advance of the beginning of an actual demonstration rehearsal operation, so that users of Imperial Airport may avoid locations and flight paths of the operations conducted under the terms of this exemption.
8. During operations in the NAF El Centro location, the NAF El Centro Tower must monitor the Imperial Airport UNICOM frequency and advise the Blue Angels of any aircraft approaching Imperial Airport. In the event that an aircraft approaching Imperial Airport is within the NAF El Centro Class D airspace and is not within the Imperial Airport traffic pattern, the Blue Angels must halt their demonstration rehearsal until such traffic has cleared.
9. During operations in the NAF El Centro location, the Blue Angels must remain at or above 1,500 feet above ground level when within 1.5 nautical miles of the Imperial Airport boundary.
10. Demonstration rehearsal operations may be conducted only during the day, under visual flight rules, when the reported visibility is at least 3 statute miles and the reported ceiling is at least 1,000 feet above the surface and 500 feet above the maximum altitude of any planned maneuver.
11. Operations conducted under this exemption may not be conducted at indicated airspeeds in excess of 600 knots for maneuvering flight, and 300 knots when flying en route.
12. Demonstration rehearsal operations may be conducted after advance coordination has been accomplished with the Birmingham, Alabama, or San Diego, California, Flight Standards District Office (FSDO), as applicable, and with appropriate FAA air traffic officials. A letter of agreement with the affected FAA officials and FAA ATC and FSDO representatives constitutes advance coordination. The team must notify the appropriate FAA Flight Service Station (FSS) of the date, time, place, areas, altitudes, nature of the activity, and duration of the operation and request that a notice to airmen be issued. Such notice must be accomplished by providing the controlling FSS with a copy of this exemption at least 48 hours before the first scheduled event and no more than 72 hours before the event.

13. Operations conducted under the terms of this exemption must not be -
  - a. Directed toward any person observing the demonstration rehearsal activity;
  - b. Conducted at a distance less than 1,500 feet from any person when conducting aerobatic maneuvers; or
  - c. Conducted at a distance less than 500 feet horizontally from any person when conducting nonaerobatic flight operations.
14. "Person," as used in Condition No. 13, does not refer to persons who are members of the U.S. military service working under the direct supervision of the U.S. Navy in connection with operations conducted under this exemption.
15. Operations must be halted for any reason that is in the interest of safety. Operations also must be halted when unauthorized persons, vehicles, or aircraft enter the operations area and are not associated with the U.S. military service working under the direct supervision of the U.S. Navy in connection with the exempted operation.
16. A control point must be established where the exemption holder or its representative must coordinate the demonstration. The control point must be continuously available to FAA personnel upon request.
17. This exemption is not valid for any flight demonstration by the Blue Angels at any public aviation event that would otherwise require a Certificate of Waiver granting relief from any pertinent section of 14 CFR.

This exemption terminates on March 31, 2000, unless sooner superseded or rescinded.



William Sacrey  
Acting Deputy Director, Flight Standards Service  
Issued in Washington, DC, on March 27, 1997